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1 Nov
1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: CIA Member, IHC

FROM : H. C. Eisenbeiss
Director of Central Reference

SUBJECT : Preliminary Conclusions for the Study of
Community Bibliographic Service

DRAFT

1. We have reviewed subject document, which was produced by

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[REDACTED] We acknowledge that it is a preliminary draft and only a summary of the actual findings, but--given that--we find it to be a shallow effort--particularly considering the several millions of dollars that would be needed to implement what

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[REDACTED] recommends. We find that the study is also flawed by errors that apparently have come about through misunderstandings of the CIA systems and their operating environment, by a methodology that over-emphasized the collection of data, by assumptions that are questionable and reflect a bias towards certain approaches, by a conclusion that has no supporting evidence, and by recommendations that reflect incomplete study. (U)

2. The contractor's primary recommendation is for direct, on-line access to the current RECON data base by selected, cleared analysts in the Community. The recommendation is based on cost estimates that are not substantiated (and compare favorable against misrepresented CIA estimates) and on a misunderstanding of serious security limitations in Community access to RECON. The recommendation also addresses only part

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of the CIA proposal. It is not clear whether off-line access to ADSTAR should also be provided, and the contractor sets aside the question of Community requirements for expanded RECON coverage in source material and depth of indexing. The question of coverage has major resource implications and should not be postponed. (U)

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3. While the study addresses costs of the [REDACTED] recommendations, nothing in the recommendations touches on how the proposal will be funded. In paragraph 9 of the study, the comment is made that CIA has indicated that it has no resources to provide Community bibliographic services. This is only part of the story. Our original proposal stated, at the insistence of the DDCI, that resources to expand and upgrade existing systems to serve the needs of other Community agencies "should be provided by those agencies." Any proposal that does not address this cost reimbursable approach will be a new proposal that will require DDCI approval. (U)

4. In general we feel that the study needs further work to more completely define Community requirements and to better represent costs and problems involved in implementing the CIA proposals. The following paragraphs discuss our concerns. (U)

Contractor Errors

5. From the beginning we have been concerned about the contractor's methodology, which we feel has led him to overemphasize the collection

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of data--to the detriment of analysis and understanding--and consequently to misunderstand the nature of the systems under study. This has led to errors in his preliminary statements. There is one early example. In September 1979, we were asked to review the preliminary statistical tables compiled by [REDACTED]. We found several errors that demonstrated a misunderstanding of our systems. For example, one set of data we provided was completely misread, and, based on this misreading, [REDACTED] presented an erroneous table of data. In addition, footnotes on other tables showed a poor understanding of what our data represented. (U)

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6. The [REDACTED] preliminary conclusions paper also contains errors. Some examples:

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-- [REDACTED] maintains that the CIA proposal was in response to the analyst support study (paragraph 2). This is not so. CIA made its proposal before the findings of the analyst support study were known. (U)

-- Paragraph 3 states that ADSTAR is part of the SAFE project. ADSTAR is a separate system which, hopefully, will be available to SAFE users, using the new communications system being developed for SAFE, but it will remain a separate system available to both SAFE and non-SAFE users. (U)

-- In the discussion of the RECON extracts currently within COINS (paragraph 4, sixth subparagraph), the study creates

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the impression that there is only one extract--for finished intelligence--and that all RECON finished intelligence bibliographic references are available in COINS. Neither is true. There are three other limited extracts (two for SIGINT and one for intelligence reports

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[REDACTED]. Each of these extracts has a limited date span (the finished intelligence extract covers only a 24 month period). (C)

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-- Part of the rationale for the [REDACTED] recommendation to accept the CIA proposal on RECON rests on a misunderstanding of the security limitations we face. In paragraph 8, the study dismisses security problems because of the "limited" nature of a RECON record, as opposed to a full text record. The study assumes that fully cleared reference analysts in other agencies would have no problem in accessing all of RECON. This reflects a misunderstanding of several factors: 1) that the RECON record is an enhanced document title often containing sensitive information from the document text; 2) that this enhanced title, at the request of the document originator, must carry the same controls as the document; and 3) that OCR, as the custodian of the system, must respect the requirements of the document originator in order to have a system that is worthwhile. To accomplish what the study suggests would involve changing the attitudes of a number of offices and agencies--no small effort in this time of greater concern for security. (C)

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-- In its cost estimates for the implementation of RECON,
25X1A [REDACTED] reflects a poor understanding of the CIA
proposal for direct on-line access to RECON (paragraph 9).
Each of the five options presented by CIA represents a
spectrum of activity (and costs) that are dependent on
the amount and type of service requested. All of our
cost estimates were for the high end of the spectrum,
viz. the most costly. For the direct on-line RECON
25X1A option, which [REDACTED] addresses, we assumed that we
would have to add additional documents both to our index
and our document storage; we also assumed more in-depth
indexing as a requirement since RECON was designed for
CIA needs not DoD's, State's or NSA's. The [REDACTED] 25X1A
recommendation is for direct on-line access to RECON
without changing the present sources for RECON or the
level of indexing. This would eliminate the need for
some 15 personnel in our original estimate. It would
not, however, eliminate the need for 15 others involved
in computer operation, programming and user interface
(requirements coordination)--which was part of our
original estimate. This represents a serious omission. (U)

Contractor Methodology

7. As we have indicated above, we are concerned by the contractor's emphasis on the collection of data. We have sensed a desire by the contractor to have a substantial mass of data to validate the objectivity

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of his study of a contentious issue. While this desire for objectivity is commendable, we do have some concern about the contractor's analysis of the data. In the contractor's preliminary statistics, we not only provided corrections to the data, but we also suggested that the contractor analyze the data supplied by other agencies. NSA, for example, reported that it had 61% more CIA finished intelligence documents on file than CIA reported. We also suggested--because we sensed that various agencies were using different ground rules in reporting data--that more caveats be added to the statistical study to better define what the reported figures represented--lest future readers be misled. We have not seen, by the way, the corrected statistical data. (C) *

8. Two other aspects of the contractor's methodology bother us:

- Central to the contractor's approach was the assumption that each agency's requirements for a central bibliographic index are reflected in their own systems, and that a comparison of each system against RECON would determine if RECON satisfied the needs of each agency. What this approach does is to compare RECON, a bibliographic index designed specifically to provide a generalized retrospective search capability for all documents of intelligence interest with other systems, loosely defined as bibliographic, that were established to support specific agency systems primarily for handling their own documents (SOLIS, for example, is as much a current mail file as it is a mechanism for retrospective search). The CIA proposal

asked that the IHC study whether RECON (and ADSTAR)
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"would serve the Community's interests" not whether RECON compared favorably with other Community systems. Paragraph 4 of the [REDACTED] study states that RECON has notable shortfalls in US SIGINT field reports, State cables and open source literature. These documents were deliberately omitted from RECON because [of] their content was not of that much interest to CIA. They represent the additional documents discussed in the CIA proposal that would have to be added to meet Community needs. An extensive study was not necessary to document the obvious. The contractor's time would have been better spent by determining to what extent these shortfalls decreased the desirability of RECON. (C)

-- From the beginning the contractor has been overly concerned with defining the costs of the CIA proposals. Implicit in our proposal was the understanding that realistic costs can only be developed once the Community requirements are known. As stated above, we do not feel that the contractor has clearly defined these requirements. In his cost estimates, the contractor has not only misrepresented CIA cost estimates, he also has not offered supporting rationale for his own cost estimates. We feel that this extensive effort to provide cost data is misleading and premature. What should be first determined is whether the Community finds RECON feasible and useful ~~desirable~~ as a Community bibliographic index, managed by

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CIA on a cost reimbursable basis, and--if so--in what configuration. (U)

Questionable Assumptions

9. Two assumptions appear to represent pre-existing points of view that have led the contractor to his findings and recommendations. The first of these assumptions is that a free text search and retrieval capability is better than a "labor intensive" index search capability. This is reflected in paragraphs 4 (subparagraphs two and four) and 7. The contrast of "labor intensive" RECON with a supposedly labor saving free text system such as SOLIS is misleading. For example, SOLIS costs 10 workyears just for the editing function (OCR² has 17 indexers for RECON). The contractor does not address the total costs of systems in his comparisons, nor does he attempt to compare the costs of a bibliographic index cum ADSTAR versus a free text search and retrieval. Rather, he suggests that free text search and retrieval is the only answer^Λ overlooking its inability to handle "conceptual" queries. The contractor apparently sees no inconsistency in his concern for the "labor intensive" nature of RECON and his desire that the central bibliographic index being developed for SAFE becomes an integral part of "the Community bibliographic system." (C)

10. The second assumption ~~that~~ we question is that long range Community needs are best addressed by distributed bibliographic responsibilities (paragraph 7). In recommending this approach, the contractor is reviving a proposal made by another contractor (██████████) to the IHC in 1977 for a functionally interdependent approach to information handing. This

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approach was discussed in the Library Facilities Working Group of the IHC, but no agreement was reached on implementation. CIA, at the time, objected to the proposal because of its general nature and provided an extensive paper raising a variety of questions on costs and management

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of such an approach. [REDACTED] in resurrecting the [REDACTED] proposal, provides some questionable costs (60-75 additional people) for a centralized bibliographic index managed by CIA and proposes a distributed approach as the "most feasible solution" without addressing the limitations of such an approach. SOLIS, for example, is limited to SIGINT documents and does not contain sensitive materials, and CIRC II, as the analyst support study pointed out, is woefully slow--both in input of materials and in response. The distributed approach also ignores the variety of limitations imposed on such a system by present security practices, and the major question of how such a system can be managed. The raising of this long-range proposal of questionable validity complicates what should be a relatively simple study. (C)

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11. The [REDACTED] recommendations are addressed in paragraph 12. Our comments are as follows:

-- The first recommendation does not agree with the paper's discussion in paragraph 9, which suggests the acceptance of both the direct on-line access to RECON and the off-line access to ADSTAR. Which is [REDACTED] recommending: RECON, or RECON cum ADSTAR? This recommendation, for whichever configuration, addresses only part of the CIA

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proposal. In [REDACTED] second recommendation, the scope and coverage of RECON is set aside for further

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study. With the substantial resource and space implications involved, the Community requirements for RECON (viz., source coverage and depth of indexing) should be determined before implementation. The scope of RECON coverage has major implications for document storage and computer storage and processing capacity. It would be more economical to reach agreement on this now rather than try to add to RECON's coverage at a later date. We recommend that the contractor study this further before presenting his findings. (U)

- The third recommendation glosses over security limitations that make its implementation almost impossible, as we have discussed above. The contractor needs to spell out the realities of the security implications not to make a recommendation that ignores these realities. (U)
- The fourth recommendation talks to a future IHC concern that has little place in a study which should focus on the CIA proposal. This recommendation should be dropped. (U)
- The fifth recommendation says, in effect, that direct on-line access to ADSTAR is too expensive. What is there left to study? (U)
- The sixth recommendation reflects an assumption throughout this paper that SAFE will/should become a Community

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system. SAFE is a joint CIA/DIA project providing a variety of functions to support production; the bibliographic index which is only one part will be for CIA. To talk of any eventual Community involvement in SAFE is premature. SAFE needs to be operational first. At that time, costs, security and a wealth of other factors can be studied. We were not privy to the conversations between

25X1A [REDACTED] and the SAFE project monitors, but we feel that paragraph 5 of this study misrepresents what these monitors said. The attempt to rewrite SAFE requirements at this time to ensure a Community bibliographic system would add additional costs to the project and further delay the project. (U)

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